

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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A main image and a background image are formed using colors each defined by a set of n-valued basic color gradation values each having any one of n possible values (n is an integer equal to or larger than 3) and defining a gradation value of a corresponding one of a predetermined set of basic colors. Different data items representative of candidates for the background image are stored as background image data candidates. Different sets of the basic gradation values corresponding respectively to the background image data candidates are stored as candidates for a main image gradation value set commonly applied to all valid pixels of the main image. One of the background image data candidates is arbitrarily set to a background image data item representative of the background image. Out of the candidates for the main image gradation value set, one corresponding to the background image is set to the main image gradation value set. A main shape image data item representative of the main image is formed by assigning a validity-indicative value to all pixels of a main shape image of the main image as the all valid pixels, and an invalidity-indicative value to the remaining pixels. A synthesized image is formed by synthesizing the main image item and the background image based on a main image data item having the main image gradation value set and the main shape image data item as well as the background image data item.